

# ABOUT GROWTH

A Quarterly Publication About Growth Management

Fall 1998



**WASHINGTON STATE  
COMMUNITY, TRADE AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Building Foundations for the Future*

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## Washington state's aviation program promotes healthy, vital airports

**By Sid Morrison**  
Secretary of Transportation  
Washington State  
Department of Transportation



**T**he state has an interest in a healthy aviation system, because aviation is important to the economic health of Washington and the quality of life of its citizens, businesses, and visitors. One of the major challenges of our day is to balance aviation needs with the needs of local communities.

In Washington, there are 129 public use airports identified in our Aviation System Plan. All of the airports are available for general aviation use and 13 facilities offer scheduled commercial service. Because the state has an ownership interest in only a small percentage of aviation facilities in Washington, the state's actual role is most frequently one of partnership and advocacy.

Sponsorship of public use airports is largely under the authority of local governments, which invest resources to preserve the aviation infrastructure and

to keep these airports operational for the aircraft that use them. Protection of these valuable facilities is of paramount importance to both the economic viability and the quality of life in Washington. With the population and development increases experienced in our state, airports are coming under increasing pressure from encroaching development.

In 1996, the Washington State Legislature, through SSB 6422, recognized the inherent social and economic benefits of aviation and the importance of protecting aviation facilities from incompatible land uses.

Through the legislation, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation Division was called on to create a technical assistance program to provide technical aviation resources to cities and counties. The goal of the Airport Land Use Compatibility Program is to foster a balance between infrastructure preservation, quality of life, and community identity.

To meet this challenge, the program develops resource information on height

**PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 8**



**Tacoma Narrows Airport**

PHOTO / RITA ROBISON

## ABOUT GROWTH

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# Future of airports linked to local land use decisions

By Shane Hope  
Managing Director, Growth Management Program, CTED

**G**eneral aviation airports throughout the state are important community assets. Urban or rural, they provide transportation, economic development opportunities, and emergency services.

In 1996, the Legislature recognized the importance of these facilities. It amended the Growth Management Act to direct cities and counties to plan for general aviation airports and the lands adjacent to them to ensure that they will be viable community assets into the future.

Now when cities and counties write or amend comprehensive plans and development regulations and permit new development, they need to consider the needs of general aviation airports. In these documents, local governments are to discourage the siting of incompatible uses adjacent to general aviation airports.

The future of the airport is linked to every chapter in a comprehensive plan. This includes many things, from the airport's location and the uses around it, to what kind of services are available for its development, to how it fits into a community's transportation system. Zoning around the airport is also critical.

CTED is working closely with the Aviation Division of the Washington State Department of Transportation as they develop guidance for cities and counties. This guidance will help communities assess the risks and liabilities for allowing certain uses adjacent to airports.

One of the most difficult aspects of this planning is to make sure the uses near the airport are compatible with it and that the

airport can be used safely and efficiently into the future. CTED can provide coordination or technical assistance on growth management issues.

As with other land use decisions, local officials need to involve the public, gather data, study conditions, and make tough decisions. Public involvement brings in affected citizens and property owners, ports, neighborhood groups, airport users, and economic interests.

Tall towers or noise-sensitive uses, such as schools, usually don't belong next to an airport. But agriculture, golf courses, or light industry might be fine, depending on the local circumstances.

### Washington's airports owned largely by local governments, ports

In Washington, 129 public use airports are identified in the Washington State Aviation System Plan. Sponsorship of the airports is as follows:

40 (31%) are owned by cities
13 (10%) are owned by counties
31 (24%) are owned by public port districts
24 (19%) are owned privately
17 (13%) are owned by the state
4 (3%) are jointly owned by cities and counties or between cities

Another critical factor in determining uses around an airport is whether the airport is located in an urban or rural area and what kinds of public facilities and services are available.

The uses around Paine Field near Mukilteo and Everett may be different from the uses around an airport in rural areas in Jefferson and Lewis counties.

The key is to ensure that airports can be safe and viable, while other community needs are met.

# Skagit County debates how much protection is needed for its rural airport

By David Hough  
Planning Consultant

**H**ow much protection does a rural airport need? Skagit County officials and staff met recently with representatives of the Port of Skagit County and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to discuss how much land use protection is appropriate for a rural general aviation airport. The center of discussion was WSDOT's draft recommendations in relation to safety on density limitations for future residential development within the airport environs.

The port operates a general aviation airport that includes two runways, one 5,000 feet and the other 3,500 feet. The airport is located on Bayview Ridge that sits above the Skagit River Valley.

Historical development patterns in the area have been industrial development adjacent to the airport with residential development primarily in the southeast portion of the ridge. Skagit County adopted height, noise, and aviation easement requirements for new development to protect the airport in 1979. The city of Burlington has provided sewer service to the area for a number of years.

County officials are facing local pressures for continued urban level residential development along the view corridor of the ridge in the outer fringe of the airport environs.

WSDOT is recommending specific density limitations in the safety zones surrounding the airport. Its recommendations represent the first specific land use suggestions received by the county for the protection of general aviation airports.

The current industrial development in the airport environs fits within those recommended limitations, but

the expansion of the residential area would far exceed the one dwelling unit per 2-1/2 acres as suggested by WSDOT.

The county and city of Burlington have proposed that the urbanizing area of Bayview Ridge be designated as an independent urban growth area (UGA). The Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board has restricted the UGA to the existing port lands surrounding the airport, leaving much of the current industrial development and urban residential development outside of the UGA. The industrial designated area not included by the hearings board represents the principal general industrial area in the county that is served by urban services.

County officials together with the city of Burlington, Port of Skagit County, other service providers, and citizens in the area will be working on a subarea plan to address the issues that have arisen relating to the proposed UGA designation. A major part of the study will be to explore options relating to the recommendations of WSDOT for the long-term protection of the Skagit Regional Airport.

## New CTED publication

A new publication, *Model Code Provisions: Urban Streets and Subdivisions*, is now available from CTED's Growth Management Program. The publication describes provisions that can be incorporated into local subdivision ordinances and street standards that provide for small lots occupied by small houses, narrow streets lined with sidewalks and trees, and various types of neighborhood open spaces.

To obtain a copy, call 360-753-2222 or email [wendyg@cted.wa.gov](mailto:wendyg@cted.wa.gov)

## Ecology offers SEPA workshops

The Department of Ecology is sponsoring five all-day workshops on the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

The goal is to provide basic and advanced information on administering and using SEPA, including information on the November 1997 amendments to the SEPA rules on project review. People attending will receive the new SEPA handbook.

Information in the workshops will be valuable for state and local agencies that:

- Conduct environmental review under SEPA;
- Review and comment on other agencies' documents; and/or
- Use SEPA in decision-making.

### The workshop schedule is:

#### Mount Vernon – September 29

Best Western Cottontree

#### Longview – October 1

Monticello Hotel

#### Tukwila – October 8

Tukwila Community Center

#### Ellensburg – October 13

Central Washington University

#### Spokane – October 15

Cheney Cowles Museum

Workshops will run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. The registration fee is \$25. Space may be limited, so preregistration is important.

For registration information, contact Elizabeth Phinney at 360-407-6923 or email: [ephi461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:ephi461@ecy.wa.gov)

# Airport/land use compatibility program offers guidance on zoning, safety issues near airports

By Theresa Smith

Aviation Planning Manager, Aviation Division  
Washington State Department of Transportation

**W**ashington state offers a land use compatibility program to help protect public use airports from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

It is based on a 1996 state law that is significantly changing the approach to land use planning adjacent to airports and the service provided by the WSDOT Aviation Division (RCW 36.70.547 and 36.70A.510).

To tackle the encroachment issue head on, WSDOT's Aviation Division created the Airport Land Use Compatibility Program. Although the state has an interest in promoting an effective aviation system, it does not have the authority to make land use decisions

to prevent the encroachment of aviation facilities.

The primary authority for meeting this state interest rests with the owners of Washington's airports. The Airport Land Use Compatibility Program is charged with forging partnerships with and between jurisdictions and airport sponsors and with acting as an advocate for compatible land uses surrounding airports.

The program's assumptions are based on federal regulations (14 CFR part 77) from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), analyses performed on NTSB data, case law, and other general resource areas.

The Airport Land Use Compatibility Program identifies three primary venues where encroachment typically occurs: height hazards, safety, and noise.

## Height

On height hazards, the program assists in long-range and current planning decision making.

In Washington, the state standard for height hazards accepts the national standard (14 CFR part 77). Although the standard identifies airport boundaries, the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) authority is limited in scope. It is required to meet the airspace needs of all users, aviation related or not, and to accommodate antenna structures to fulfill broadcast requirements. FAA's findings are advisory, mitigation measures do not exist, and alternative sites cannot be recommended.

The role of the Airport Land Use Compatibility Program is to provide the best available information to the jurisdiction prior to its land use decision making. The information is based on federal regulations, court

Many Washington communities are examining how development near airports should be regulated. These two photos, taken from the recently released *Pilots Guide to Washington Airports*, show residences near airport runways.





rulings, and guidance from aviation groups.

### Safety

Historical data from the NTSB show areas adjacent to airports are more susceptible to aircraft accidents.

The factors analyzed include the: 1) phase of aircraft operation when accidents most often occur (approach, descent, landing, takeoff, climb, or cruise); 2) major cause of accidents and incidents; and 3) location of these accidents in relation to the proximity to an airport. Caution needs to be exercised when plans are made, land is zoned, and construction permits are issued in areas adjacent to airports in an effort to reduce the severity of an accident, loss of life, or injury.

From 1984 to 1993, about 47 percent of air carrier and commuter accidents occurred during the ap-

proach, descent, or landing at an airport, according to the NTSB. During the same time period, approximately 64 percent of all general aviation accidents occurred during approach, descent, landing, or takeoff-climb phase of operation at an airport.

This research shows much of the risk from air transportation is associated with the takeoff and landing phase of flight. To maintain safety and implement good land use planning, the most critical areas to protect from incompatible land use are those areas below the approach and departure paths to an airport.

### Noise

The Airport Land Use Compatibility Program holds strong expectations for jurisdictions and airport sponsors to work together on noise manage-

ment. It is the responsibility of the jurisdiction to factor noise realities into land use decision making for the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of its constituents.

### Program Implementation

WSDOT's Airport Land Use Compatibility Program provides general technical assistance, a best practices handbook, comprehensive plan review, and technical outreach, including workshops.

To assist the program with its work, local governments are required to send copies of all proposed and adopted plans and regulations to WSDOT's Aviation Division, as well as sending them to CTED.

For details on the program's work, call the Aviation Division at 206-764-4131 or 800-552-0666.

# Sale of Evergreen Airport's North/South Runway sparks land use controversy

When the owners of Evergreen Airport sold the North/South Runway, a grassy area used in emergencies and for antique aircraft, the new owner applied to the city for a change in land use designation.

A proposal to change the property's airport zoning to multifamily residential with up to 18 units per acre was denied by the city of Vancouver. Another proposal is expected to be submitted to the city.

This article, based mostly on excerpts from a staff report prepared by the city's Community Development Department for Musa's first proposal, describes the difficulties local governments face as they work to develop policies to protect general aviation airports in their communities.

The Evergreen Airport is a privately owned, public use, general use airport. Most of the planes that use it are privately owned, and about 250 planes are based at the airport. Although the airport has no passenger and freight service, student pilots are trained at the facility.

Wally Olson, a well-known leader in aviation in the state, founded the airport, located in east Vancouver's rapidly growing suburban area. The airport is operated by his family following his death.

## Background

The North/South Runway has been officially closed for over a year, although it is used infrequently for landings, mostly when the wind direction shifts to create a crosswind on the main

runway. The North/South Runway is not referenced in the airport directions or plans, but the operator confirmed that it could be used for "emergency" landings when the crosswinds are strong.

Another airport is located to the north of the Evergreen Airport. It is managed by the North/South Airpark Association, a group of pilots who operate and maintain this private strip, some of whom live nearby with hangars on their residential lots.

An Airport Environs Combining District requires notification to airport owners, the Federal Aviation Administration, and WSDOT's Aviation Division to mitigate the adverse impacts of new development on airport operations, reduce the range of noise sensitive uses, and require notification of future landowners of the impacts of locating near an airport.

The district does not prevent certain types of development near or adjacent to airports. It requires that responses from the airport operator and state and federal aviation authorities be considered to determine whether the proposal causes a signifi-

cant threat to the health or safety of people on or off the airport.

A comprehensive study of the airport resources of Clark County, aimed mainly at siting a new airport, has begun with the establishment of an Airport Advisory Task Force. The task force will identify the need for existing public use airport facilities and explore ways to protect airports from the encroachment of incompatible land uses. The services offered by Evergreen Airport will also be examined.

## Findings

Among the findings in the staff report recommending denial of the zoning change was one related to safety:

"The applicant proposes a change in designation on a portion of this property which could impact the existing airports, located to the north and east, which creates an abrupt change in use, and the potential for an extreme safety hazard, according to the WSDOT Aviation Division... The properties are located partially within the approach/takeoff zones of two runways."



## CONFERENCE — SAVE THE DATE!

# Windows on Washington: New Perspectives on Housing

November 2-5, 1998 — Spokane, Washington — Cavanaugh's Inn at the Park

Offered by the Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development and Washington State Housing Finance Commission

CTED and WSHFC are bringing high-caliber national, Canadian and regional speakers to Washington. They and other well-known speakers will address the topics below. More specific breakout sessions on these topics will be offered.

**STATE OF U.S. NEIGHBORHOODS** — Alexander Garvin, author of *The American City: What Works, What Doesn't*, Yale University

**CHANGING NATURE OF THE HOUSING MARKET** — Dr. Sandra Newman, Johns Hopkins University (invited)

**BUILDING FROM THE GROUND UP: DESIGN INNOVATIONS** — Michael Pyatok, University

of Washington professor and affordable housing designer

**GETTING IT DONE: STORIES OF SUCCESS!** — Peter Dreier, Director, Public Policy Program, Occidental College, Los Angeles

**WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?** — Town Meeting debate

**HOUSING POLICY ISSUES, INCLUDING POST-ELECTION ANALYSIS** — Richard Devine, housing and political analyst, Devine and Gong, San Francisco

**DREAM BUILDERS — TV PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS** — Innovative, affordable housing projects in North America

The three-day conference includes two evening receptions. TV stars Dean Johnson, from PBS's award-winning show "Hometown," and Scott Morgan, from HGTV's "Dream Builders," will make special appearances.

Many well-known speakers will participate in breakout sessions including Leigh Ferguson, Neighborhood Enterprise, Chattanooga; Connie Hogland, Neighborhood Housing, Boise; Jeanne Price, Community Development Division, Santa Fe; Barry Lamont, Northeast Rural Resources, Colville; Mary Ann Gleason, National Coalition for the Homeless, Washington, D.C.; Mark Hinshaw, urban designer, Seattle; R. John Anderson, Anderson, Lamb, and Associates, St. Paul, Minnesota; Avi Freedman, McGill University's Affordable Homes Program, Canada; Susan Maxman, architect, Philadelphia; Kevin Kelly, Civano Project, Tucson; Jim Grow, National Housing Law Project, San Francisco (invited); and many others.

For details, including how to sign up for the conference, call 800-767-HOME or check [www.wshfc.org/conf](http://www.wshfc.org/conf)

Registration forms will be available in early October.

## Douglas County examining airport needs

By John Shambaugh  
Planning Manager, Douglas County  
Department of Transportation and Land Services

**A**ir transportation is an important means of commerce and transportation for Douglas County and surrounding communities.

A unique partnership has been formed among Douglas County, the Douglas County Port District, and the Chelan-Douglas Regional Airport Board, which oversees Pangborn Memorial Airport.

The county has developed a telecommunications ordinance for cellular phone, radio, and television towers. The ordinance prohibits telecommunication facilities from penetrating the airspace around the airport.

Douglas County also is developing an airport overlay zone for the area surrounding airports in the county.

The zone would recognize and protect those areas devoted to public use aviation and reduce the potential for airport hazards.

The airports in Douglas County are currently located in areas that have not had a lot of encroachment by conflicting land uses. They are located in rural areas dominated by agricultural activities. This offers the opportunity to craft regulations that would lessen the impacts of incompatible uses, such as schools, apartment complexes, and other similar structures.

Compatible uses near airports in Douglas County could be agricultural and light industry.

Discussions have taken place with Douglas County, Douglas County Port District, and Chelan-Douglas Airport Board on the airport overlay zone. Drafts will be reviewed by these groups and forwarded to the Douglas County Planning Commission. The airport overlay district will be an amendment to the county's development regulations.

Douglas County has one regional airport, Pangborn Memorial Airport near East Wenatchee, and two smaller airports, one located in Mansfield (photo left) and one near Waterville.

Private airports, mainly small airports used by farmers for spray planes, will not be covered by the overlay zone.

## Natural hazard planning workshops to be offered in September

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development is sponsoring four workshops around the state on how to prepare an optional comprehensive plan element on natural hazard reduction.

The workshops will examine the natural hazards of flooding, landslides, and wildfires and how to reduce the physical and financial impacts through good planning.

The workshops are designed to give guidance on the preparation of a comprehensive plan element that addresses natural hazards and their impacts on land use. The workshops will also include discussions on policies, programs, and regulations on natural hazards that have proven to be effective in reducing losses and minimizing conflicts with existing land uses.

These workshops are scheduled as follows:

**Olympia — September 24**  
Ramada Inn Governor House

**Everett — September 25**  
Howard Johnson

**Yakima — September 29**  
DoubleTree Hotel

**Spokane — September 30**  
Ridpath Hotel

For more information, including how to register, call Dick Fryhling at 360-753-4319 or Sheri Evans at 360-753-4318.

## State aviation program promotes healthy, vital airports

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

hazards, safety, and noise; the economic and social value of airports on local, regional and state economies; the effect of incompatible land uses on risk and liability; and desktop reference tools.

WSDOT has a vested interest in promoting a healthy and vital aviation system. Our role is to provide the best available information to jurisdictions regarding the options and impacts of land use compatibility around airports. One of the most compelling opportunities of the Airport Land Use Com-

patibility Program is forging partnerships with and between jurisdictions and airport sponsors, creating opportunities for collaboration, and empowering all parties towards better communication among all parties.

Identifying appropriate land uses and population densities adjacent to airports, as well as understanding the risk and liability of inappropriate land use designations, will shape the way issues involved in planning for general aviation airports are framed for communities in the future. Land use decisions are long-term decisions and

through collaborative efforts among local governments, airport sponsors, and the state effective policies and development standards can be achieved.

Advocacy, building communication bridges, and valid research and data are the components in moving land use decision making to effective levels which protect the health, safety, and welfare of communities while preserving our valuable aviation system.



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